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SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/17/2019  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#)  
SUBJECT: YASENI CALLS FOR MORE INVOLVEMENT FROM  
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN ELECTIONS

REF: A. KABUL 1281  
[1](#)B. KABUL 1350

Classified By: Political Counselor Alan Yu for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Lower House Deputy Speaker and presidential candidate Mirwais Yaseni requested more USG and international community involvement in the presidential election to help offset President Karzai's alleged use of government officials and resources to benefit his campaign. In a June 15 meeting with PolCouns, Yaseni said the IC had not yet proposed measures to assist opposition candidates with media financing and transportation. "It's not enough for the internationals to be impartial if Karzai is using government resources illegally," he said. Yaseni believed most governors were not actively interfering in the campaign on Karzai's behalf, but instead blamed Cabinet ministers and security officials for intimidating supporters of other campaigns. Yaseni claimed Border and Tribal Affairs Minister Assadullah Khalid had unsuccessfully sought to bribe Yaseni's 2nd VP running mate, Lower House MP Abdul Qayum Sajaddi, to withdraw from his ticket.

[1](#)2. (U) Despite his concerns with Karzai's campaign activities, Yaseni boasted that Karzai will struggle to top 25 percent support in the first round of balloting Aug. 20, putting Karzai on par with himself and United Front nominee Abdullah Abdullah (we are skeptical of Yaseni's analysis). On PolCouns's urging, Yaseni promised to roll out an issues-based campaign in the coming weeks. His campaign will focus on ethnic unity, anti-corruption, and meaningful dialogue with Pakistan. Yaseni officially began his campaign on June 16 with a series of rallies in Kabul and participated in a five-candidate debate on Radio Azadi.

[1](#)3. (C) Yaseni confirmed he had renounced his British citizenship before the start of the official campaign (ref A). He believed Karzai's campaign had filed an anonymous complaint with the Electoral Complaints Commission regarding his then-dual citizenship, citing Karzai's "long-time" belief that the UK supported Yaseni's candidacy. (A UK Embassy official later told PolOff the UK has a close relationship with Yaseni ) an admitted anglophile ) but has not engaged him on his candidacy).

Parliament Issues  
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[1](#)4. (U) Yaseni admitted he had not followed Parliament issues closely while the Lower House was wrapping up its legislative session earlier this month. Like other MPs, he was unsure when next year's parliamentary elections would be held and when Lower House MPs' current terms would expire (ref B). However, Yaseni promised PolCouns to consider US concerns with the extradition law and other key pieces of legislation when Parliament reconvenes later this summer.  
EIKENBERRY